

POST COVID-19 WORLD: WHAT 2022 HOLDS FOR WORK-LIFE BALANCE FOR INDIA

Covid-19 has changed people's priorities. Mental Health, work-life balance and flexibility rank higher in the minds of people now. According to a report published by McKinsey & Company in May 2021, 51 per cent of people want a better work-life balance post-Covid-19 pandemic. The majority of people want more hybrid models and better work from home opportunities. The fact is especially important for India which has one of the biggest workforces in the world.

“While Covid-19 pandemic has kept everyone on their toes, it has equally thrown huge opportunities to transform and contribute in many meaningful ways.” Companies worldwide are looking for ways to incorporate more flexible ways to work for their employees.

Mckinsey's report added that more than 50 per cent of the employees now want to work from home for three days a week. The majority of them feel that it is important to instil trust and clarity in the online communication process. Interestingly, nearly 25 per cent of the employees said that they are ready to switch employers if the current employers ask for full-fledged on-site work.

More than 75 per cent of the respondents now place top priority on mental health. Interpersonal relationships play a major role in increasing job satisfaction and improving work performance, the report added.

2022 brings a new hope along with it. Singh further said, “It will be an interesting journey in 2022 with a lot of learnings along the way.” With the emerging hybrid working models and flexible timings, this year is set to bring a new change in the job ecosystem of the country.

Source:<https://www.india.com/business/post-covid-19-world-what-2022-holds-for-work-life-balance-hybrid-model-work-from-home-for-india-companies-news-pepsico-5169443/>

WORK-LIFE BALANCE AFTER THE PANDEMIC

The Covid-19 crisis has shoved work and home lives under the same roof for many families and the struggle to manage it all is now visible to peers and superiors. As people postulate on how the country may be forever changed by the pandemic, one can hope that one major shift will be a move away from the harmful assumption that a 24/7 work culture is working well for anyone. Employees are disproportionately well-compensated for being ideal workers. “Time greedy” professions like finance, consulting, and law — where 80- or 100-hour weeks may be typical — compensate their workers per hour more than professions with a regular 40-hour week. Flexible-work arrangements come with severe penalties; many who leave the workforce for a period or shift to part-time never recover their professional standing or compensation. When individuals push back — asking for less travel or requesting part-time or flexible hours — their performance reviews suffer and they are less likely to be promoted, studies find. Simply asking for workplace flexibility engenders professional stigma.

The “ideal worker” expectation is particularly punitive for working mothers, who also typically put in more hours of caregiving work at home than their spouses. Furthermore, men are more likely to “fake it” and pass as ideal workers, while women make clear that they cannot meet these expectations, including by negotiating flexible-work arrangements. Many organizations are not amenable to adjustments, leading to the perception that women are opting out of the workforce — although research suggests women are actually “pushed out.”

In our world of laptops, cellphones, and teleconferences, the intellectual and analytical tasks of “knowledge workers” can continue at home. But low-wage workers increasingly are subject to similar expectations of responsiveness, even as they have less job security and even less flexibility than higher paid workers. In the midst of this pandemic, store clerks, delivery drivers, and warehouse workers are now forced to be “ideal workers” too, risking exposure to the virus in public with little support for the families they leave to go to work. Executives and managers have the opportunity to choose quality work over quantity of work. They can value the creative ideas that emerge after a midday hike or meditation session, rather than putting in face time at the office. They can stop rewarding the faster response over the better response, or the longer workday over a more productive workday. They can rethink highly competitive career tracks where you make it or wash out — such as giving tenure-track scholars and partner-track lawyers the choice of a longer clock before their evaluation. During this pandemic, employers are seeing that workers can’t function well without accommodation for their family responsibilities. Will that lesson last after the crisis is over? American families want greater choices in determining how their work and their families fit together. Post-pandemic, can we create a system that fits real workers, not just idealized ones? If so, we have the opportunity to emerge from this crisis with both healthier employees *and* better performing organizations.

Source: <https://www.forbes.com/sites/deloitte/2020/03/20/flex-work-is-a-frontline-solution-and-not-just-in-a-crisis/#3bfd33f2a9a> *Re*

WHAT DOES A POST-COVID WORK-LIFE BALANCE LOOK LIKE?

Working from home, hybrid working, remote working, the 4-day working week; these are all terms which organisations have typically grouped into an overarching term, 'flexible' working, but they do not mean the same thing. "Organisations need to take the time to fully understand what flexible working really means to their employees and take action accordingly to facilitate their needs", explains Elisa Nardi, a career development expert and CEO of Notebook Mentor.

"Flexible working gives employees the control to plan their own working schedule. If starting work an hour earlier and finishing an hour earlier means that they can spend their down-time doing more of what they love, then organisations need to consider being open-minded in allowing this.

Leadership and development coach Margo Manning, author of *The Step-Up Mindset for Senior Managers* believes that there will be a surge in career switchers as people realise the importance of following their own wants, wishes, and ambitions above monetary incentives.

"Whilst money is a good driver, it is often not the main driver, it is a means to an end. Just chasing the big bucks can be demoralising. It can also be physically and mentally draining when the individual aspires to be the person others want them to be, instead of doing something entirely different," explains Margo.

In a new work-life balance world, Margo says that people will value roles which they are passionate about and gain true enjoyment from. "These could be in entirely different industries, sectors, departments and even disciplines

Source: <https://www.thehrdirector.com/features/health-and-wellbeing/what-does-a-post-covid-work-life-balance-look-like/>

IMPLEMENTING THE WORK-LIFE BALANCE DIRECTIVE IN TIMES OF COVID-19: NEW PROSPECTS FOR POST-PANDEMIC WORKPLACES IN THE EUROPEAN UNION?

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the difficulties workers face in combining their work and family responsibilities on a daily basis. With workers being asked to adjust their schedule and working patterns to fluctuating measures for mandatory telework, on-site presence, contact-tracing and school closures, juggling between work and care obligations has become an ever-growing daily complexity.

Work-life balance has been difficult, if not impossible, to find for many workers with care obligations, be it because of children, elderly, or dependents. For some workers, teleworking arrangements have given them new opportunities to combine care and work, while for others, especially parents with young children, imposed teleworking has caused organisational hassle, a loss of productivity and an increase in work-related stress. The COVID-19 crisis has thus worsened the situation for many carers and deteriorated their work-life balance, as a consequence of school closures, reductions in informal help received from grandparents and a diminished access to formal personal care and domestic workers, added to the necessity to stay at home with children after a positive COVID test in the home or in the classroom. In particular women suffered from a disproportional increase in domestic work and diminished working opportunities.

In the last 30 years, the European Union (EU) has progressively committed to enhancing work-life balance across Member States. The adoption of the Work-life Balance Directive in 2019 is a paramount achievement in this sense, marking an important step for gender equality and the right of workers with care obligations in the EU. While the Directive is coming to its implementation deadline in August 2022 and the COVID-19 pandemic is still continuing its effects, the moment is crucial for Member States to ensure better rights for caring workers, and to implement long-term reforms of the labour market to make work more compatible with care responsibilities. This paper assesses the opportunities as well as the obstacles for the implementation of the Directive in light of the effect of the COVID-19 pandemic.

The article starts by discussing the notion of work-life balance and explaining its relationship with gender equality (I). It then explores the double-edged sword of the COVID-19 pandemic in this area (II), and the progressive commitment of the EU to work-life balance (III). Finally, it assesses the opportunities and obstacles for greater work-life balance in the EU in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic (IV).

Source : [//link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12027-022-00703-y](https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12027-022-00703-y)